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**FROM THE HISTORY OF STUDYING  
ILIA CHAVCHAVADZE'S PROSE  
(KITA ABASHIDZE'S ETUDE ON ILIA CHAVCHAVADZE)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The essay on Ilia Chavchavadze's work is distinguished in terms of its capacity and literary value in Kita Abashidze's fundamental study entitled *The Etudes on the 19th Century Georgian Literature*.

When discussing Ilia's literary legacy, the main goal of K. Abashidze is to show the process of his creative evolution. The critic believes that Ilia was not free from the influence of Romanticism and that his gradual move from Romanticism to Realism is reflected in both lyrics and poetic epics as well as prose. The critic claims that we did not have a classic representative of Romanticism in Georgian prose. Even though Ilia is a realist writer in his main field, but the romantic flow was not foreign to his prose either. In this sense, Ilia himself created a prior stage for the development of realistic prose. In particular, K. Abashidze sees the elements of Romanticism in *The Story of a Beggar*. He indicates that we encounter the idealization of individual characters or situations in the story, which is characteristic of Romanticism.

According to the critic, the importance of *Letters of a Traveller* has not been properly assessed. In his opinion, the literature of Georgian "mountaineers" has emerged from the artistic world of this story. The national ideal expressed by *Lelt Gunia* has become a cornerstone of the work of the writers of the Georgian "Mountain School". According to K. Abashidze, *Is a Man a Human?!* was written based on the principles of classical realism. The critic points out that Ilia portrayed not only the images of nobles on the path leading to moral degeneration during the serfdom but in general, "true and unmistakable images of Georgian traits."

According to K. Abashidze, *Otaraant Widow* is the crown of Ilia's prose. If in his work entitled *Is a Man a Human?!* the writer depicts national types, in *Otaraant widow* he describes a universal image. As the critic concludes, the widow is such a clear, realistic character that she has hardly any counterpart in Georgian literature.

The main worth of K. Abashidze's reasoning on *Otaraant Widow* is that he showed the general character of the problem of mutual alienation raised in the story and precisely identified the artistic function assigned to the character of *Sosia*, the miller. As exemplified by this character, the critic demonstrated that the problem of mutual alienation depicted in the story occurs in the scope of human relations in general, rather than merely in the context of the relationship between social strata.

**Keywords:** History of Georgian criticism, Ilia Chavchavadze, Kita Abashidze.